

Building California's Preschool For All Workforce

A SERIES OF POLICY BRIEFS

State Registries of the Early Care and Education Workforce: A Review of Current Models and Options for California

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Introduction

□ Over the last fifteen years, a great deal of discussion and experimentation has been directed toward increasing the education and training of teachers and providers who work with young children. During this period, the term "registry" has become a catchall phrase for various vehicles that states are using to build more coherent professional development systems for the early care and education (ECE) field.

□ In California, the current focus on creating a publicly funded Preschool For All system for three- and four-year-old children is bringing renewed attention to ECE professional development, given the likelihood of increased educational requirements for preschool teachers. The foremost challenges include tracking the educational status and needs of the state's current ECE workforce; identifying the needs of the state's higher education system to develop and expand programs for ECE students; promoting access to education and training through a variety of student supports; and maintaining and increasing the cultural and linguistic diversity of the ECE workforce.

□ More than 20 states now have some form of ECE workforce registry, varying widely in purpose and structure, and registry planning is underway in at least four other states - Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky and

Texas. California already has in place several of the functions that registries perform in other states, but some planners and policy makers are now considering a broader or more comprehensive registry system.

□ This policy brief presents the results of a recent nationwide survey of ECE workforce registries, brief profiles of registries in nine states, an analysis of the registry-type functions that California already has in place, and recommendations for future efforts.¹

Registries in Other States: An Overview of Major Themes

□ ECE workforce registries are a relatively recent phenomenon in the field, with the longest-running, most experienced registries all founded after 1990: Alabama, 1993; Connecticut, 1993; Delaware, 1992; Montana, 1995; South Carolina (begun on a smaller scale in 1994, and implemented statewide in 2002); Tennessee, 1993; and Wisconsin, 1991. Among the registries we surveyed nationwide, we identified four primary and often overlapping purposes:

- 1. Tracking and validating the training and education of the workforce;
- 2. Creating a coherent professional development system, and improving access

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- to training and educational resources;
- 3. Promoting increased recognition and status □
- of the ECE workforce; and
- 4. Additional data collection on the ECE □ □
- workforce.

□ **1) Tracking and validating the training and education of the workforce.** The most common motivation for initiating a workforce registry is to maintain a record of the training and education status of teachers and providers in child care programs. Such a record can assist in state and local planning, and it allows teachers and providers to track their own career development over time. Some states update this record every time a participant completes additional training, while some update it only when registrants renew their membership, typically on an annual basis.

□ This function of tracking and validating training is an emphasis in the following states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Missouri, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

□ These tracking and validation activities are sometimes linked closely to state licensing functions, in terms of monitoring compliance with state regulations. For center-based staff in Hawaii, participation in the registry is a licensing requirement. South Carolina's registry issues an annual transcript of each participant's training for the past two years, and for regulated child care programs, these transcripts are required for licensing renewal (see South Carolina profile, below). Delaware's First Personnel Registry, while not mandatory, is part of the state Office of Child Care Licensing. Florida's registry is administered through 16 child care training coordinating agencies, a component of the state's Child Care Licensing Program.

□ **2) Creating a coherent professional development system, and improving access to training and educational resources.** In a number of states, creation of an ECE workforce registry has been part of a broader effort to strengthen the state's professional development system, and to promote quality in early care and education services for

children and families. Registries have allowed planners to assess training needs and gaps in the state's ECE workforce; to develop multiple pathways to professional development; and to strengthen linkages between training and formal education.

□ This registry function is an emphasis in the following states: Arizona, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

□ **ECE trainer registries.** Separately from or in addition to workforce registries, a number of states have also developed registries of ECE trainers who are available to conduct professional development activities in the state. Trainers are included in workforce registries in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Maine, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Minnesota, New Mexico and Texas currently have registries of trainers only, and have not developed ECE workforce registries. In general, trainer registries serve the function of linkage and referral networks, describing the qualifications and experience of listed members without setting specific standards for membership.

□ **3) Promoting increased recognition and status of the ECE workforce.** Various states - including Arizona, Arkansas, Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, and Wisconsin - view increased recognition and status of the workforce as one of the major goals and outcomes of their workforce registries. Often this recognition takes the form of professional development certificates issued to participants, or periodic recognition events. But in several states, recognition includes monetary incentives and rewards to teachers and providers who pursue professional development.

□ Registries in Arizona, Missouri, Montana and Oklahoma (see profiles below) offer modest stipends for each career or educational level a registrant achieves on the state's professional development ladder; Idaho and Nevada, currently developing new registries, are planning to implement stipend programs in the future. Arizona's registry is unique in offering a \$25 stipend to every member who registers. Tennessee's registry formerly offered tuition assistance and stipends for pursuing training, but

these were recently eliminated by state budget cuts. In Wyoming, some reimbursement funds are available through the registry for attending classes and conferences.

▢ **4) Additional data collection on the ECE workforce.** Information related to the training and educational status of participants is the most common form of data collected by workforce registries, but some states collect and use ECE workforce data for additional purposes. As part of the participant application form, Arkansas, Idaho, Missouri and Tennessee ask for information on compensation; this question is optional in Maine, Nevada, West Virginia and Wyoming. Hawaii has used its registry data in setting guidelines for workforce compensation and promotions; Nevada plans to use its data for consumer education about professional development and quality; Oregon State University is using that state's registry data to study patterns of retention and turnover among registrants and non-registrants; and Wisconsin's data became part of a state workforce study.

Workforce participation in registries

▢ In most states, participation in an ECE workforce registry is optional. It is mandatory, however, for all ECE practitioners in Wyoming; for center-based staff in Hawaii and Wisconsin (both states having begun with a voluntary system); for staff of state-contracted programs in Maine; and for staff of all regulated child care programs in South Carolina (participation by faith-based programs is optional).

▢ Where membership is optional, the level of ECE workforce participation in registries varies widely, raising questions about the effectiveness of some registries in terms of data collection and workforce development planning. Among states with optional registries, participation rates are relatively high in Delaware (76% of all child care center staff, 96% of providers in small family child care homes, and 54% of providers in large family child care homes) and Wisconsin (9,000, or 39% of 23,000 licensed providers). The Georgia and Tennessee registries also have substantial membership (with 16,000 and 26,000 registrants respectively), but data

were not available on the total number of eligible practitioners.

Fees

▢ No fees are charged for registry participation in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, or Wyoming. The following fees are charged in other states: Maine, \$10 to apply; Montana, \$25 to apply, and \$10 to renew; Nevada, no fee to apply, and \$5 for annual renewal; New Jersey, \$10 to apply, and \$5 for annual renewal; Oklahoma, \$10 to apply; Oregon, \$25 to \$70 to apply, based on career level; West Virginia, \$10 to apply; and Wisconsin, \$40 per year (recently increased from \$20). Hawaii is considering fees for the future. As noted earlier, the opposite situation holds in Arizona, where each participant is offered a \$25 stipend to register.

State ECE Workforce Registries: Nine Profiles

Arizona

▢ Arizona's career registry, S*CCEEDS (Statewide Child Care and Early Education Development System), was implemented in 2002. It is a collaboration of two resource and referral agencies, the Association for Supportive Child Care (lead agency), and Child & Family Resources, Inc. Designed for all ECE practitioners - including those who work directly with children ages 0-14, administrators, support agency staff, and trainers - the system now has over 2,600 registrants, roughly 450 of whom are trainers. The primary functions of S*CCEEDS are to provide better access to training and education resources throughout the state; to allow practitioners to track their own training, education and work experience; and to improve the status and recognition of the profession. Data are updated annually when participants renew their registration.

▢ Based on their level of training and education, participants are placed in the state's Career Level System, move on to higher levels at their own pace, and receive a \$50 stipend and achievement certificate for each higher career level achieved on the ladder -

along with an initial \$25 stipend when they first register. Registry coordinators also note that some center directors use the Career Level System as a basis for determining staff wages, creating wage scales in accordance with these professional development levels. Funded by the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Child Care Administration, through the federal Child Care Development Fund, S*CCEEDS has an annual operating budget of \$750,000. For more information, visit: www.asccaz.org/SCCEEDS.

Maine

□ The Maine Roads Registry and Career Lattice, a project of Maine Roads to Quality: Child Care and Early Education Career Development Center, was implemented in 1999. The center is housed at the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service in Portland. Open to all ECE practitioners and administrators, the registry is mandatory for employees of programs contracted with the Maine Department of Human Services; registrants pay a \$10 application fee. The registry's primary goals are to promote quality in ECE programs; address the training and education needs of all ECE professionals; develop multiple ways for professionals to achieve their career goals; increase linkages between training and formal education; recognize and reward professionalism; and monitor the effectiveness of the state's career development system. The registry currently has about 9,000 participants - an estimated participation rate of 28 percent.

□ Data on participants' training, degrees and experience are used to place them on the state Career Lattice, and to assist them in meeting licensing requirements and tracking their own ongoing training. The data are updated automatically whenever a registrant completes training through the Career Development Center; information on other training completed is updated once a year. An annual recognition event honors participants who have completed a certain number of training hours and moved up the Career Lattice. Some center directors also use the lattice as an internal guide for determining staff pay scales. In addition, learning opportunity grants of \$250 are awarded to registrants

who have completed 90 hours of training, and scholarship funds to complete training are available for low-income registrants. The Maine Roads Registry and Career Lattice receives funds through the Maine Department of Human Services, Office of Child Care, and Head Start. For more information, visit: <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/maineroads/Registry.html>.

Missouri

□ Missouri's Professional Achievement and Recognition System (PARS) began in 2000, and is coordinated by the Open Initiative career development program at the Center for Family Policy and Research, University of Missouri-Columbia. Its primary purposes are to recruit ECE professionals into Missouri's career development system, and to allow participants to track and receive recognition for their ongoing training and education. PARS is voluntary to all ECE practitioners, and currently has about 2,500 registrants - and estimated 15 percent of the state's licensed population. Members are recruited largely at conferences and regional meetings; a major incentive is the WIN program, which offers stipends according to levels of training completed.

□ Data are updated annually, or every six months for participants in the WIN program. PARS is currently seeking to achieve greater geographic diversity across the state, so that its database more accurately reflects Missouri's overall ECE workforce. The registry is funded by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services-Bureau of Child Care, Social Services and Elementary and Secondary Education; annual operating costs are roughly \$150,000. For more information, visit: http://www.openinitiative.org/pars_overview.htm.

Montana

□ Montana's Practitioner Registry, based at the Early Childhood Project, Montana State University at Bozeman, began in 1995. The registry's primary purposes are to promote high quality in ECE programs by developing a knowledgeable and skilled workforce; to increase the status, recognition and compensation of the ECE workforce; and to help consumers, employers and others know a

practitioner's level on the state's Career Path system. Participation is voluntary, and is open not only to ECE practitioners but teachers in public and private school up through third grade; staff of child care resource and referral (R&R) agencies and other agencies serving children and families; and higher education staff working in ECE-related fields. The registry is widely publicized through R&Rs, licensing renewal packets, and conferences and other events. Registrants pay an initial application fee of \$25 and an annual renewal of \$10. There are currently about 700 registrants - an estimated participation rate of 10 percent.

□ Registrants are also eligible to participate in the Best Beginnings program, operated by the state Early Childhood Services Bureau, which offers mini-grants to centers and family child care homes, as well as modest Merit Pay stipends for individuals, based on levels achieved on the Career Path. Data are updated annually, and can be used to generate customized reports on the ECE workforce for the state licensing office, the state R&R network, and other partners. The registry is funded through the state's allocation from the federal Child Care Development Fund at approximately \$240,000 per year. For more information, visit: <http://www.montana.edu/wwwecp/practitioner.html>.

Nevada

□ The Nevada Registry, begun as a pilot project in January 2004, is administered through a contract with the Washoe County School District in Reno, and supported by the federal Child Care Development Fund. The registry operates on a voluntary basis for ECE practitioners, administrators, staff members of children and family agencies, trainers, and ECE faculty at higher education institutions.

□ The primary purposes of the Nevada Registry are to create a formal career ladder for ECE professionals, based on a set of seven "core knowledge areas," that can eventually be linked to wage increases; to document and recognize practitioners' professional development; to promote statewide access to quality training experiences; to create standards for informal and non-college training; and to offer consumer education about the importance of a well-paid and well-educated ECE

workforce. Planners also hope to implement a compensation component of the registry, involving small stipends linked to levels achieved on the career ladder. For more information, visit: www.nevada-registry.org.

Oklahoma

□ The Oklahoma Registry, administered by the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development at the University of Oklahoma, College of Continuing Education, began in 1999. Its primary functions are to track and recognize the professional development of ECE practitioners, in accordance with the state Professional Development Ladder, and to help practitioners qualify for annual stipends through the R.E.W.A.R.D. Oklahoma program. The professional development status of teachers and providers is also a factor in how programs are rated in Oklahoma's "Reaching for the Stars" quality initiative. The registry is open to ECE practitioners, trainers, college faculty, consultants, and agency staff of child care organizations. Initial application and annual renewal fees are both \$10. There are currently about 350 registrants, representing a statewide participation rate of about 10 percent.

□ R.E.W.A.R.D. Oklahoma stipends for teachers, assistant teachers, family child care providers, directors and assistant directors range from \$200 to \$2,000 per year. Registry data are used to generate quarterly reports on the ECE workforce to the program funder, the Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care, and data are also available upon request to the state licensing department and the University of Oklahoma. For more information, visit: www.cccpd.org.

Oregon

□ Oregon's Professional Development Registry (PDR), administered by the Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education at Portland State University, began in 1997. It is a voluntary, statewide system designed to recognize and document the professional achievements of practitioners working in ECE settings. The PDR awards Professional Development Level certificates to participants at entry level or one of six other levels, each of which represents various combinations of

training, education and experience. The registry is open to ECE practitioners, R&R staff, college faculty, K-4 classroom teachers, and others in the field. There is an application fee of \$7.50.

□ The PDR currently has about 5,000 registrants. Oregon State University is now using the PDR database to conduct a study of retention and turnover in the ECE field. Registry staff note that they expect the program to help improve status, salaries, working conditions and employment opportunities in the field; several Oregon agencies have revised their personnel policies and salary schedules to honor the PDR levels. For more information, visit: <http://www.centerline.pdx.edu>.

South Carolina

□ South Carolina's Personnel Training Registry, administered by the Center for Child Care Career Development in Greenville, began on a limited basis in 1994 and went statewide in 2002. Participation is now mandatory for staff of all regulated child care programs in the state; faith-based programs can register on a voluntary basis. The registry currently has about 24,000 participants. Its primary function is to track and document the training records of ECE practitioners for the state Department of Social Services and Department of Health and Human Services, and participants receive a transcript of training once a year. There is no fee.

□ The Personnel Training Registry does not contain an incentive program, but the Center for Child Care Career Development does provide scholarship funds for students entering child development programs at South Carolina technical colleges. The registry is funded through an annual contract with the South Carolina Department of Social Services. For more information, visit: www.scteched.tec.sc.us/cccd/about.htm.

Wisconsin

□ The Registry, Wisconsin's "professional recognition system for the childhood care and education profession," began in 1991, and became mandatory for center-based ECE staff in 1998. It is optional for family child care and license-exempt providers. The Registry tracks participants' training

and education, and awards certificates verifying that individuals have met all state entry level and continuing education requirements. Training above and beyond those requirements, along with experience and professional contributions, are represented by the 10 levels (from entry level to doctorate) and "stars" of The Registry's career ladder. (Each star represents 20 units of professional development and one year in the field.) All training is quantified by core knowledge areas as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Data are updated annually, and have recently been used as part of a statewide workforce study.

□ Based in Madison, The Registry is a collaboration of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, the Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, the Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association, the Wisconsin School-Age Care Alliance, and the Wisconsin Head Start Association. There are currently about 9,000 registrants (roughly 39-percent participation) and the majority of funding now comes from participant fees, due to the loss of federal funding through the Child Care Development Fund; the annual fee was recently raised from \$20 to \$40. Total annual expenses are about \$360,000. For more information, visit: www.the-registry.org.

Current ECE Workforce Activities in California

□ There have been four main purposes of ECE workforce registries as developed in other states. The following is an analysis of the current status of these four functions and activities in California. While California may well choose not to develop an entirely new infrastructure, such as a freestanding registry, it may be fruitful to add onto or retrofit existing structures in the state to improve the system.

□ ***Tracking and validating the training and education of the workforce.*** Some of this function of maintaining training records occurs for those who are required to hold a Child Development Permit - i.e., those who work in Title 5-funded programs. Increasingly, too, CARES and other county-based compensation/retention programs are requiring participants to obtain a permit. But training records

are updated only at five-year intervals by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, when permits are renewed or when a holder advances to a new level of the Permit Matrix. And since the permit-holding population is a minority of the workforce, there are still great limitations on our overall record of workforce professional development. Licensed family child care providers, and center-based staff who work in programs not holding state contracts, are subject to the less stringent Title 22 regulations, and there is no ongoing statewide process for tracking and validating the training and education that these practitioners receive.

□ ***Creating a coherent professional development system, and improving access to training and educational resources.*** In California's case, the professional development system in early care and education is a diverse one, with many participants. But while it is strong in some key areas, it is by no means well-unified, or simple to understand and navigate.

□ Community colleges offer affordable, accessible education throughout California that is approved by and linked to the Child Development Permit system. But at a time when they face rising demand, these colleges also face dwindling resources for developing and maintaining ECE, child development and other programs. And there are very few options in California for earning a BA or graduate degree in ECE.

□ For the great majority of the workforce - those not required to hold a Permit or degree - there is currently very little coherence in terms of career ladders or professional development paths that one can follow. Compensation/retention initiatives have done a great deal in many counties to provide counseling and support in helping students and practitioners determine a career path, but not every county does this, and these programs are not permanent. Critically important training is offered by the California Early Childhood Mentor Program, the Child Development Training Consortium, resource and referral agencies, family child care associations and others - much of it with support from the Child Development Division (CDD) of the California Department of Education, which currently spends some \$95 million per year on ECE program quality

improvement. Unfortunately, much training in the ECE field is non-credit-bearing, and unaligned with any system of standards or coordination.

□ Coordination remains a key need. Overall, in California's ECE arena, there has long been a patchwork of different agencies and groups, often carrying out similar functions for different populations depending on funding streams or program guidelines. The possible advent of Preschool For All in California, however, brings an important opportunity to build a more coherent ECE professional development structure - one that is aligned with a credentialing process and linked with two-year and four-year institutions of higher education.

□ ***Promoting increased recognition and status of the ECE workforce.*** Through the advent of CARES and other compensation and retention initiatives during the past decade, this function is being actively carried out in most California counties. There is a growing sense of professionalism and recognition in the field, and a markedly greater retention and stability of the workforce. Evaluation results have been very positive (Hamre, Grove & Louie, 2002; La France et al., 2004), but the effort is not yet firmly institutionalized statewide, and programs remain vulnerable on a year-by-year basis.

□ ***Other data collection on the ECE workforce.*** A number of groups are currently involved in ECE workforce data collection:

- • For over two decades, many county-level □ □ studies have provided rich workforce profiles, □ □ but these remains a sporadic source of data, □ □ since none are institutionalized and ongoing. □ □ With support from First 5 California, a □ □ statewide workforce study is being conducted □ □ in 2004-05 by the Center for the Study of □ □ Child Care Employment and the California □ □ Child Care Resource and Referral Network, □ □ but no provisions are in place for an ongoing □ □ update of such research.
- • Compensation and retention initiatives at the □ □ county level (e.g., CARES programs) collect □ □ data on recipients in terms of training □ □ received, work experience, and permit status,

but this is not a unified system of tracking, and it does not offer a profile of the entire workforce. Since not all counties are linked, the data also cannot be aggregated statewide.

- The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing collects data on courses taken by permit holders, and some other demographic data, but has no ongoing data analysis or reporting function.
- The Child Development Training Consortium collects profiles of those who use its services to apply for a Child Development Permit and/or for other professional development goals, but while this provides a snapshot of users at any given point in time, there is no ongoing tracking of individuals.
- The California Early Childhood Mentor Program tracks the education and training background and experience of participating mentors, but not the students they serve.
- The Community College Chancellor's Office maintains a database with some aggregated information about its student population, but not about individuals. There is no equivalent data source for four-year institutions, most of which do not maintain easily accessible student information.
- The Child Development Division of the California Department of Education maintains some information about the staff of state-contracted ECE programs, but does not have the resources to aggregate or analyze it.
- Resource and referral agencies collect detailed information about center-based and family child care programs, but not about individual staff. The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) has proposed a database expansion that would include a national workforce data collection effort, but this is not likely to be taken up without major additional resources.

While these data sources are rich and could be amended in some ways, they are currently too disparate or occasional to be useful for ongoing tracking and planning statewide. What is needed is a description of the overall ECE population, as well as longitudinal data at either the community or individual level.

Conclusion

The functions performed by registries in other states, and to some extent in California, are important ones for creating a coherent and useful professional development system for the ECE field, planning for long-term workforce needs, and truly turning early care and education into a viable, rewarding career. It is encouraging that as of this writing, First 5 California is creating a Blue Ribbon Committee process for preschool workforce development that will aim to clarify the best directions for California to take.

Currently, the ECE professional development system in California is extremely complicated and fragmented, and we are lacking a unified vision or message about how to make it more coherent. And in a field that has evolved over several decades from many different funding sources, there is always the danger that adding one more ingredient will create still further complications. From that perspective, the advent of Preschool For All could add another layer of confusion - but it could also be a long-overdue opportunity to align a clear set of standards with public dollars.

Over the next year, the Blue Ribbon Committee will be charged with examining a host of ECE workforce issues, including standards, certification, supports and incentives such as scholarships and loans, compensation, higher education programs, and data collection. In order to ensure the ongoing success and continuity of preschool and school readiness programs in California, and to meet the needs of all children from birth to age five, it will be vital to develop a clear system of professional development for the early care and education workforce. As part of this process, an ECE workforce registry is an option that warrants further consideration and study.

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